

Message Text

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64

ACTION OES-04

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CG-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 OFA-01

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 INT-05 FEA-01

(ISO) W

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P 072345Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6371

INFO AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA PRIORITY

AMCONSUL BELIZE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY

USCINCSO PRIORITY

USNAVSO PRIORITY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE GUATEMALA 1779

DEPT PLEASE PASS NAVSEASYS COM AND COMMANDANT U.S. COAST GUARD

E. O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: TPHY, GT, BH, HO

SUBJECT: OILGSPILL IN BAHIA DE AMATIQUE

1. ON 31 MARCH OIL BARGE OWNED OR LEASED BY SHELL OIL COMPANY (BELIZE) DEPARTED PUERTO BARRIOS, GUATEMALA UNDER TOW OF TUG-BOAT REGISTERED IN BELIZE. BARGE SUNK IN 120 FEET OF WATER APPROXIMATELY EIGHT AND HALF MILES NORTH-NORTHWEST OF PUNTA MANABIQUE LIGHT. BARGE WAS CARRYING 2500 BARRELS (1250 BARRELS RAPID CURE ASPHALT CUT WITH KEROSENE AND 1250 BARRELS OF BUNKER C). SHELL BELIZE NOT INFORMED OF SINKING UNTIL 2 APRIL. SHELL BELIZE THEN ALERTED SHELL'S GUATEMALA BRANCH AND GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY OFFICIALS.

2. AERIAL OBSERVANCE OF SPILL ON 6 APRIL INDICATED LEAKAGE OF BOTH BUNKER C AND ASPHALT. SLICK EXTENDS THROUGHOUT UPPER REACHES OF BAHIA DE AMATIQUE. HEAVY DEPOSITS OF ASPHALT AND
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BUNKER C LIE ON BEACH BETWEEN COCOLI AND PUNTA DE PALMA ON

WEST SIDE OF BAHIA DE AMATIQUE WITH LIGHT TRACES ON NORTH SIDE OF PUERTO BARRIOS SEAWALL. FURTHER HEAVY DEPOSITS RANGE FROM PUNTA MANABIQUEMSOUTHEAST TO ALMOST SAN FRANCISCO DEL MAR IN GULF OF HONDURAS.

3. QUALIFIED OBSERVER ESTIMATES THAT BARGE CONTINUES TO LEAK OIT AT RATE OF 150 BPD. SEASONAL VARIATIONS IN WINDS COULD RESULT IN DEPOSIT OF OIL IN BELIZE FROM PUNTA GORDA TO RIO SARSTUN AND ON HONDURAS COASTLINE.

4. SHELL VENEZUELA HAS REPRESENTATIVE ON SITE AND DIVERS HAVE BEEN FLOWN IN FROM NEW ORLEANS TO INSPECT BARGE AND ATTEMPT TO SEAL OFF LEAKS. SMALL CONTAINING BARRIER IN POSITION AND SKIMMING OPERATIONS BEING CONDUCTED BY GUATEMALAN NAVAL PERSONNEL.

5. EQUIPMENT SUCH AS HIGH VOLUME PUMPS AND LIGHTING SYSTEMS NOT AVAILABLE IN GUATEMALA. EMBASSY ANTICIPATES THAT GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT MAY REQUEST AMBASSADOR'S ASSISTANCE IN PROCURING EQUIPMENT. GOG MAY ALSO REQUEST TECHNICAL EXPERTISE TO AID IN CLEAN UP OPERATIONS.

6. EMBASSY WILL FOLLOW-UP WITH MORE DETAILED REPORT WHEN FULLER INFORMATION BECOMES AVAILABLE.
MELOY

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